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From: McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa
Sent: Fri 8/14/2015 5:53:19 PM
Subject: WHO IS HANDLING THIS? DO WE NEED DENVER OFFICE involvement?
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From: Brown, Matthew [mailto:MBrown@ap.org]
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2015 10:35 AM
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Cc: Montoya, Susan; Moreno, Ivan; Anderson, Jim; Banda, Peter; Linsley, Brennan; Slevin, Colleen; Biesecker, Michael; Knickmeyer, Ellen; Whitehurst, Lindsay
Subject: RE: questions from The Associated Press

Greetings—

Matt Brown with The Associated Press here.

For a story today, Friday Aug 14, we are focusing on events at a mine adjacent to Gold King Mine, including whether they have any link to the Aug. 5 spill.

Gold King Mine owner Todd Hennis is saying that there is potential for another, larger spill from adjacent Sunnyside Mine, which Hennis claims was the source of the

water in Gold King. Hennis says a plug at Sunnyside has caused billions of gallons of water to build up inside that mine, and as the pressure builds the chances of a spill are increasing.

Some questions for EPA:

--is EPA aware of water buildup inside the Sunnyside Mine?

--is there any estimate for the volume of water inside Sunnyside?

--does the agency have any concerns about a potential spill from Sunnyside?

--were the actions taken at Sunnyside responsible for water that was coming out of Gold King Mine?

--has the EPA seen recent increase in water discharges from the Black Hawk mine, and is that in any way tied to the events at Sunnyside?

I'm also attaching below list of questions from the past three days that remain outstanding. Please provide answers as soon as possible. I realize this is an ongoing situation, but some of the questions are very straightforward and it should not take days to get a response.

I would appreciate a reply confirming receipt of these questions and some kind of timeline on when answers will be available. I'm again CC'ing others at The AP who are covering this story.

Matt Brown

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--we would appreciate further details on the Administrator's order from Wednesday to cease work on field investigations at mines. Without some context, the order doesn't mean too much to

us. Please provide details on how many mine sites will be impacted, locations, and whether the order applies to cleanup work that is ongoing or simply investigative work that would come before a cleanup.

-the administrator has said the EPA will be monitoring sediments in rivers impacted by the spill. Has this begun? Does the EPA have any gauge yet on extent of contamination on river bottoms, etc, in the wake of the plume? Any test results available?

--How likely are the contaminants to re-mobilize? How long will this remain a potential problem?

--Mines have been leaking contamination into some of these rivers for many years; will the Gold King spill appreciably increase the contamination load in the sediments?

--If the contaminants do re-mobilize, what are the chances that they will pose enough of a threat to prompt more drinking water advisories, closing of rivers, etc?

--Are there any plans to try to remove contamination from sediment? Is that even possible?

--for analytes listed in the tables of water quality sampling data (including arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, iron, barium, etc) can you please provide corresponding EPA water quality criteria?

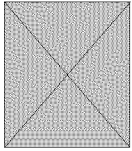
--had Gold King Mine been designated a Superfund site, what would have been the chances of the spill happening?

--how many mines are currently on the National Priorities List? Can we get a list of those or is there a way to search on the Superfund website?

--is there a gauge of how often resistance to a Superfund designation by local officials has prevented a site's listing?

-was a preliminary assessment ever completed on the Gold King Mine or for a group of mines including Gold King?

--it's my understanding that the EPA has said a water treatment plant estimated to cost \$12-\$17m (and \$1M a year to operate) would be able to clean the water in the Animas. Is that correct? And if so, is it the type of expense that Superfund would cover?



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